

Pig Farming in Lehi

By LaDrue Dorton

The first thing I can remember about the pigs was Grandfather warning me to stay away from the pig pen. Our brood sow had given birth to a litter and I had climbed the side of the sty get a better look at the piglets. I did not sense any danger because the old sow had always seemed friendly enough when I accompanied Grandfather at feeding time. I was not old enough to know that most animal's dispositions change when they give birth, and become very protective of their young. Motherly instinct, I suppose.

Before we got the cow, we always kept a brood sow. When she would have her litter, Grandfather would keep two to raise for meat and sell the remainder as 'weaner' pigs. They were usually were old enough to be weaned when they were eight or nine weeks old. After we got the cow, the situation changed. Grandfather sold the brood sow and would buy two piglets, or weaners, each spring to raise for meat, since we had plenty of skimmed milk to give them a good start.

The two pigs we raised for meat would keep us in pork products, fresh and cured, for most of the year. The first one would be slaughtered when the night time temperature fell below freezing, usually between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

We needed the cold weather to keep the meat from spoiling until we could preserve it. We cured the bacon and ham using a product called Morton's Sugar Cure. The remainder was cut into chops, roasts, ground for sausage, or rendered for lard. The second was slaughtered before it got too warm, usually in late February. If spring came early, we would cure the bacon and hams from this pig and sell most of the fresh pork.